

**Mayor's Police and Community Task Force**  
**REPORT REGARDING**  
**RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION FOR COMMUNITY BASED POLICING**  
**FOR THE NEW HAVEN POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**INTENT:** To increase the number of New Haven residents, people of color, women, LGTB, and bilingual officers within the New Haven Police Department (NHPD)

**RATIONALE:** The NHPD does not reflect the demographics of the city of New Haven. Charts (attached) prepared by the New Haven Police Department on New Haven demographics, police force demographics and the composition of recent police training classes over the last 3 - 5 years illustrate this circumstance.

African Americans, Hispanics, and Latinos make up close to 60% of the New Haven population. Currently, the approximate percentages of minority sworn officers in the NHPD totals 47.5% -- Hispanics 20.8% and African Americans 25.6%. The goal is for the NHPD to increase the percentage of New Haven residents on the force in order to mirror the demographics of the community that it is sworn to protect and to serve. In its report *Advancing Diversity in Law Enforcement* (October 2016), the Equal Employment and Opportunity Commission (EEOC) outlines the value of diversity to effective Community Policing, and outlines various methods and strategies communities can use to reach their goals. The Mayor's Police and Community Policing Task Force (MPCTF) has reviewed this and other "best practices" resources, and reviewed specific issues raised by members of the Task Force and community.

Our initial analysis shows significant legal and unintended social impacts on the city. Continuing the current process is the least economically efficient way to go forward. The next steps should include urgently addressing the total recruiting, hiring, training and development and promotion practices for officers.

**PROPOSAL:** Within three to six months, develop a Strategic Plan for the NHPD to guide recruitment and retention for Community Patrol Officers, starting with establishing a definition of the qualities needed for becoming a Community Patrol Officer. The Strategic Plan will establish clear goals and objectives for the Department as a whole, and provide a touchstone for individual officers as they evaluate their work.

The Strategic Plan will also address methods to improve the recruitment process, and through better outreach, improve the application process through clearer standards, to improve training to support new officers preparation, to establish a mentorship program to assist all officers with their professional development and advancement, to improve representation of the Civil Service Board, to clarify disciplinary regulations and develop reliable data and evaluation methods to ensure these goals of the Strategic Plan are being addressed.

City of New Haven needs to include public outreach in developing the Strategic Plan.

The MPCTF recommends that the City of New Haven establish its new Strategic Plan for Recruitment and Retention prior to issuing new notices for recruitment or holding the next Police Academy Training Class.

### **A. DEVELOP A STRATEGIC PLAN**

The MPCTF believes that systematic change is necessary to achieve not only reasonable and essential goals for retention and recruitment of minority officers, but to ensure that the NHPD can achieve excellence in its mission to serve and protect the people of New Haven. Currently, the NHPD does not have a Strategic Plan. Creating a Strategic Plan is essential for guiding and managing regular operations and administration, and it is essential for guiding and evaluating systematic changes designed to keep the department in the forefront of community policing. Community participation, whether through representation on the team creating the Strategic Plan, or through consultation with the community in meetings to review the draft of a Strategic Plan, would help anchor the plan as a vital part of Community Policing.

Prior to developing the Strategic Plan, the City needs to conduct a “Human Resources Assessment” to evaluate the structure and characteristics of the department across all steps of the recruitment and career development process (about 15 steps). Looking at what the career path looks like in general, and what it looks like for different groups (women, Blacks, Latino, LGTB, etc.) could help identify different “choke points” of unintentional or systemic obstacles.

*Elements of the Strategic Plan should include:*

1. A review the Mission Statement of the NHPD in light of new national developments, and the results the NHPD aims to achieve;
2. Continued Development of Community Policing, with a focus on justice and methods;
3. Emerging Challenges and Objectives;
4. Recruitment, Retention, and Leadership Development.
5. Facilities and Equipment;
6. Other resources needed (beyond personnel, facilities and equipment) to fulfill the objectives of the Strategic Plan. These may include new ordinances, laws, and partnerships.

## **B. IMPROVE RECRUITMENT METHODS**

The Mayor's Police and Community Task Force (MPCTF) is seeking to address the concern voiced by city residents that applicants being accepted into the New Haven Police Academy do not reflect the demographics of the city. In Class 21 of 2016, there were over 1500 applicants of which 350 were minority. Only four African Americans were accepted into Class 21 of 2016. \*

Applicants go through a series of steps before being admitted into the New Haven Police Academy: Agility Test, Written Test, Oral Test, and Background (which includes background check, background interview, polygraph test, and psychological exam). The MPCTF has reviewed evidence\* which suggests that this unanticipated and dramatic reduction of minority candidates entering the Academy is not solely due to faults in the recruitment of minorities, but also with specific aspects of the process of being admitted into the Police Academy.

The MPCTF has identified five key steps in the recruitment and application process that need improvement – outreach, the application process, and physical exam, written test, background investigation, and psychological exam.

### **Recommendation B.1 – Outreach Process**

Data needs to be collected to analyze the demographics of applicants to the NHPD (race, sex, sexual orientation) for the past two application cycles in order to understand the results of past methods, so that improvements can be designed and tested. Additionally, the PERF report on Recruitment and Retention should be incorporated in this analysis. This historical analysis should examine factors such as the time of year of outreach and methods -- flyers, radio and **T.V.** ads, social media, and community and school meetings.

### **Recommendation B.2 -- The Application Process, Physical Exam**

An applicant must have a physical exam before they can participate in the agility test. If an applicant does not have health coverage, the cost of the physical, which can range from \$300 – over \$1,000, may not be affordable for all applicants. A partnership needs to be created with a Health Care Center to provide physical exams to applicants who are not medically insured and qualify for financial assistance.

### **Recommendation B.3 – Background Check**

Background checks are currently done within the NHPD. Because an applicant may be prejudged because of their familiarity with NHPD and vice versa, background checks should be outsourced. A universal timeframe needs to be established for the period of an applicant's history that is subject to investigation in the background check.

### **Recommendation B.4 – Drug Policy**

An applicant must be in compliance with the NHPD drug policy, which holds that an applicant will not be considered if he/she has smoked marijuana the past two years or exceeded the allotted amount. Additionally, an applicant may not have smoked marijuana

in the past two years, but will not be considered because they have exceeded the amount in their past

The drug policy must be updated to properly address the precise reasons that drug use can or could interfere with an officer's integrity and ability to work. An updated policy should state that an applicant did not smoke marijuana in the past two years. More attention should be paid to the question of whether a candidate has purchased or sold drugs, and whether this circumstance (a relationship with a dealer) could compromise their effectiveness in law enforcement. Additionally, the list of prohibited drugs should be updated to include "Ecstasy."

### **Recommendation B.5 – Psychological Exam**

The City should insure that the Strategic Plan for diversity in retention and recruitment is incorporated in specifications developed for Request for Proposals and Qualifications for Psychological Examiners; and that the company and the personnel administering the psychological exam are specifically qualified to deal with diversity and inherent bias issues.

The Psychological Exam should be constructed to identify candidates with skills and abilities essential to serving as Community Patrol Officers and fulfilling the goals of the Strategic Plan.

In order to properly conduct the exam, the psychological examination company should not be in communication with the NHPD's supervisor in regards to an applicant before the exam is administered. In addition, if an applicant has failed the exam they may get a second opinion by an approved employment psychologist at the applicant's expense.

### **Recommendation B.6 – Integrity of Process**

The consultants who now administer the psychological examinations have had a long-standing relationship with the NHPD. Currently, the testing company and the NHPD's supervisor are allowed to be in communication in regards to an applicant and their background check before the exam is administered, which can be prejudicial (either positive or negative) to the applicant. A "double jeopardy" can emerge between the psychological test and the one-on-one interview.

The process needs to be redesigned and integrated to eliminate unintentional entrapment. NHPD needs to create a policy prohibiting contact between the psychologist and recruitment staff and the person(s) administering the polygraph test (stop "front loading" information to the psychologist). Rotating the administrator of the polygraph test should be considered. Administration of and staffing for background checks needs to be carefully organized to protect the integrity of the process

### **Recommendation B.7 – Community Outreach**

That the NHPD do active outreach to various community organizations and offer classes in various community settings for New Haven residents seeking a position within

the NHPD in preparation for the written and oral exams.

### **Recommendation B.8 –Valuing Community Involvement and Knowledge**

a. Offer additional points to an applicant who has participated in the Police Explorers program or attended the NHPD Citizen Academy. The Academy and Explores programs would give an applicant insight into police work and civilians’ interests and concerns.

b. Offer additional points to an applicant who has been a regular participant in their Community Management Team. The CMTs are a central feature of Community Policing. An applicant’s participation in a CMT would give them strong grounding in the communication and cooperation skills central to their work.

c. Increase the number of points for New Haven residents from 5 to 15. The Bridgeport Police Department (BPD) currently has this policy in place\*.

### **Recommendation B.9 – Diversity Awareness**

The initial application, psychological exam and one-on-one interview should all include provisions for determining an applicant’s exposure to working with people of all ages and types -- all racial and ethnic groups, immigrants, and LGBT.

### **Recommendation B.10 – Enabling Flexibility, Competitiveness and Excellence in Hiring**

Give the training division the ability to conduct continuous recruitment and “on-spot” hiring once the Strategic Plan for Retention and Recruitment is in place and the qualifications for a Community Patrol Officer is established.

## **C. IMPROVE RETENTION OF EXPERIENCED AND EFFECTIVE OFFICERS**

The NHPD will serve its community best if it is able to retain its most experienced and effective officers. The two major factors influencing employee retention are compensation and career development.

### **C.1. Salary and Benefits**

The NHPD has suffered attrition of officers leaving for higher salaries and benefits offered by nearby municipalities. Until salaries and benefits are competitive, this attrition will continue. In addition to salaries being generally competitive, the NHPD should consider salary benefits for officers who speak a second language

### **C.2. Disparities in Discipline**

The NHPD has also suffered attrition from disparities in discipline. During the administration of the last Chief of Police (about 10 years), 41 officers have been disciplined: 24 Black, 5 Hispanic, and 12 White During this time, out of a total of 450 officers, approximately 100 officers have been Black. The disparities likely result from various factors. It is essential to examine where deficiencies in training and mentoring or unintentional bias may play a role, and whether focused training for

Field Training Officers and Supervisors could improve officer development and obviate some disciplinary actions.

### **C.3. Mentorship, Development and Advancement**

The NHPD needs to improve the career development process for officers by improving the mentorship, development, and advancement at all phases of their service. This is particularly urgent now that the entire trajectory of an officer's service will be reshaped by the extension of the years of service from 20 to 25 years before retirement.

Currently, many officers leave the NHPD after 3 years. It is significant that at this "choke point," the process for advancement is less clearly articulated than it is for the first three years. A goal and a plan for retaining officers and encouraging them to achieve at least 10 years of service is necessary if we wish to benefit from their years of greatest job proficiency.

### **C.4. Designing a Mentorship System**

Mentorship by exceptional officers would benefit all officers at different steps in their service. For instance, a Field Training Officer (FTO) who has proven success in successfully training new officers would train other FTO's.

### **C.5. Continuing Education**

Evaluate current skill set of officers and offer continuing education to keep officers up to date on the best practices, prevent burnout, and ensure that day-to-day police work reflects the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan. Use the NHPD website to offer online training.

**C.6. Civil Service Board** – policies and procedures of the Civil Service Board need to be revised and updated to support the Strategic Plan's hiring and retention goals.

### **C.7. Establish ways for officers to say what needs to be improved in the system**

Create a "tip line" which officers can use openly or anonymously to suggest improvements in operations and administration. Offer a reward if an officer's tip or idea leads to change. Also establish a "whistleblower's" line.

### **C.8. Housing Opportunities -- Encouraging Officers to Live in New Haven**

Create pathways to encourage officers to be resident homeowners in New Haven such as a property tax abatement based on years of home ownership and a homebuyers program.

Expand the Officer-In-Residence program to rental properties in the city through an exchange where officers can submit an application and property owners can register an available apartment.

### **C.9. Human Resource Assessment**

To evaluate the performance of new Recruitment and retention procedures, a Human

Resource Assessment (similar to the 2007 PERF Report) needs to be done a regular basis.

**\*Sources**

1. United States Census Bureau

2. Governing the States and Localities. *Diversity on the Force: Where Police Don't Mirror Communities*. Page 10. September 2015.  
<http://media.navigatored.com/documents/policediversityreport.pdf>

3. *Advancing Diversity in Law Enforcement* (October 2016), Equal Employment and Opportunity Commission  
<https://www.justice.gov/crt/case-document/file/900761/download>